

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (h) No Sir. The wheat imported from Canada and Argentina conforms to the quality parameters under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and the phytosanitary norms prescribed by the Government of India and is fit for human consumption. However, the percentage of damaged grains in one wheat consignment from Argentina was found to be in excess of the contractual specifications. No losses has been reported so far on this accounts. The wheat imports contracts with Argentina and Canada involve foreign expenditure to the tune of Rs. 238 cores. The entire quantity of imported wheat has been added to the Central Pool to be distributed through Public Distribution Scheme and other welfare schemes of the Government.

New Strategy for Sugar Export

2183. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the export of sugar has registered a sharp decline after deregularisation of the sugar export ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union Government have asked APEDA to formulate a new strategy for pushing the export of sugar in view of its tardy progress ;

(d) the total quantity of sugar exported after decanalisation of sugar export by ISIGEIC and STC out of thier allocated quota;

(e) the reasons for lower export of sugar by these organisations; and

(f) the time by which a new strategy is likely to be formulated to boost the export of sugar ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (f) Government has decanalised export of sugar w.e.f. 15.1.97 and the export of sugar is now being carried out through Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, under Ministry of Commerce. Ministry of Food has placed a quantity of 2.5 lakh tonnes of freesale sugar out of 1996-97 season's production at the disposal of Directorate General Foreign Trade (DGFT)/ Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) for commercial exports. In addition Government has also placed a quantity of 36,300 mts. of freesale sugar/raw sugar out of 1996-97 season's production for export of Preferential quotas to EEC & USA, through Indian Sugar & General Industry Export Import Corporation (ISGIEIC) Ltd., at the disposal of DGFT/ APEDA.

After decanalisation of sugar exports w.e.f. 15.1.97 M/s. ISGIEIC Ltd. and STC of India has exported a quantity of about 1.60 lakh tonnes & about 0.17 lakh tonnes respectively

upto 30.06.97. As per information furnished by APEDA, they have issued Registration cum Allocation Certificates (RCACs) for a quantity of about 2.10 lakh tonnes of sugar (including preferential quota exports) upto 30.6.97 and as per the information so far furnished by various exporters to APEDA, a quantity of about 0.74 lakh tonnes (including preferential quotas) has been physically exported out of India upto 30.6.97.

Since the export of sugar has been decanalised and only quantitative restrictions apply, the extent of export has to be determined by the international demand and supply situation and prices prevalent in international market.

[Translation]

Assistance for Litchi and other Fruits Cultivation

2184. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the production of Litchi, sweet lime, panifal and other varieties of fresh fruit is very low in the country ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any extension centres have been set up for providing assistance to farmers in the cultivation of these fruits ;

(d) if so, the details thereof, centre-wise and location-wise;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to increase the production of fruit in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) As per the latest data available, the production of litchi in the country was 3.33 lakh tonnes during 1994-95. The production data for sweet lime and panifal are not available. However, the production of fresh fruits including these crops is not very low in the country as India occupies second position in the world in production of fresh fruits.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) In order to provide assistance to farmers, extension centres have not been set up specifically for cultivation of these crops. The assistance to farmers for cultivation of fruit crops is provided through State Horticulture/ Agriculture Department and for technology know-how through State Agricultural Universities and ICAR Institutes.

(f) In order to increase production of fruits in the country, Government of India under the Central Sector Scheme on Integrated Development of Fruits is providing assistance for area expansion, improving productivity through input supply,